

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

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July 19, 2007

Re: Ratify Gun Lake Casino Class III Compact

Dear House Representative:

On behalf of the Southwest Michigan Building & Construction Trades Council I am writing to request your support for the creation of hundreds of high paid, high skilled construction jobs in West Michigan. If that is worthy of your support, then you should vote yes on a resolution of support for the Gun Lake Casino Class III gaming compact.

West Michigan construction unions have had a very good relationship with the Gun Lake Tribe for the past seven years. We are among 40 groups that have publicly endorsed the casino. We have long supported the unequivocal benefits this project will bring the citizens of Michigan, like quality jobs and economic development. It's no wonder we are joined by business chambers, lodging associations, local governments, and school districts.

The gaming compact pending before the Legislature is a good deal for the Gun Lake Tribe and the State of Michigan. The compact is the only means for local communities and the state to benefit by way of oversight and revenues, and maximal job opportunities.

A Class III Gun Lake Casino will create 1,800 direct casino jobs with an average wage and benefit package of \$40,000 per year. The casino will purchase \$20 million of goods and services per year from local businesses. The economic output will induce 3,100 indirect jobs.

The Southwest Michigan Building & Construction Trades Council eagerly anticipates sending about 800 skilled laborers to construct a Class III Gun Lake Casino. That would breakdown to approximately 70 pipefitters, 50 welders, 50 iron workers, 75 carpenters, 75 electricians, 20 plumbers, 30 Bricklayers, 50 Laborers, 10 operators, 35 sheetmetal, 10 cement finishers

Sadly, this project could be done right now. The federal government took final action to allow casino construction in May 2005. The anti-casino attorneys have brought numerous state and federal lawsuits against Indian casino proposals. None have prevailed. In fact, the Michigan Supreme Court recently ruled that the Michigan Legislature legally approved eleven

tribal-state gaming compacts by resolution, and clauses allowing gubernatorial amendments are legal under Michigan law, although the Gun Lake compact contains no such provision.

In February 2007 a federal judge threw out all legal challenges against the Gun Lake Casino. The 23 is enough attorneys again appealed the inevitable. The case is being heard by the same appellate court in Washington, D.C. that ruled in favor of New Buffalo, Michigan's Pokagon Band of Potawatomi. The Pokagon's Four Winds Casino will open in August 2007.

Make no mistake about it; the delay has cost Michigan a high price. Our 800 members waiting to build the Gun Lake Casino are being prevented from earning approximately \$1500.00 per (week, month). In turn Michigan is being prevented from collecting thousands in income taxes, payroll taxes, and state unemployment tax.

It's obvious to all observers that the Gun Lake Casino has been delayed far too long. This tragedy is compounded by the fact that Michigan has suffered from an unacceptably high unemployment rate for years, currently 6.9%, which is near the very worst nationally.

Finally, we ask you not to be swayed by "moral" arguments. The truth is, those making those arguments have been linked to gaming consultants in Lansing. And if you're concerned about gaming expansion it's time to face the facts: gaming is available at your corner store, local restaurant, supermarket, and a horse track or casino within 100 miles of your home. The moral argument does not stand to reason. It should also be noted that ten major newspapers endorsed the need for the Gun Lake Casino gaming compact, while currently no paper has advocated its defeat.

Please ratify the Gun Lake Casino Class III gaming compact under a resolution of support so the construction trades, local communities, and all Michiganders can benefit from jobs, oversight, and revenue sharing dollars only available under a compact. If you have any questions, please contact me at (269)209-3716 or local340ironworker@sbcglobal.net . Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Hugh T. Coward

Hugh T. Coward, President
SW MI Building Trades

State Building Trades, etc.